

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS
OF THE
LEGISLATURE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

IN RELATION

To fortifying Port Royal Harbor in that State.

DECEMBER 23, 1856.—Read, referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS of the Committee on Federal Relations, in relation to fortifying Port Royal harbor.

The Committee on Federal Relations, to whom were referred the resolutions instructing them to inquire into the expediency of fortifying Port Royal harbor, and of establishing a naval depot at Beaufort, beg leave to report :

That they have given the subject the consideration that was due to it, and find, to their gratification, that the recent United States coast survey, executed by Lieutenant Maffit, demonstrates it to be the deepest bar and the widest harbor south of the Chesapeake.

Its location within the limits of this State claims for it the attention of the legislature.

The committee find, by referring to the report of Lieutenant Maffit, the distinguished officer in charge of the survey, that Port Royal has two entrances, the one seventeen (17) feet deep, and nine hundred (900) metres in width; and the other nineteen feet (19) deep and twelve hundred (1,200) metres in width, with a mean rise of seven (7) feet, which will enable merchant vessels of the heaviest draught to enter at half tide.

The said report further states that the commercial facilities of this harbor are unrivalled; and that it is easy of access in northeasterly gales, which are always the most dangerous and destructive along the southern coast. History and tradition both have represented this harbor as possessing great depth and capacity in former times, and the recent survey has confirmed their truth. This character of permanency amid the shifting sands of our southern inlets is an important consideration in its utility. When your committee reflects

that upon the whole line of southern coast, extending from the Chesapeake to the capes of Florida, there does not exist another harbor where a ship of the line, large steamer, or merchantman, can take refuge from either foe or storm, the subject presents itself in such a form as to demand the especial attention of this legislature and of the federal government.

It is not irrelevant to the subject to state the fact that, in the war of the revolution this port was occupied by the heavy ships of Great Britain; and in the war of 1812 her ensign again floated in mastery upon its bosom, insulting to the pride and patriotism of the people who dwelt upon its shores, because they possessed no such defences as would enable them to repel the invader.

By a reference to the map it will be perceived that this harbor occupies an important geographical position in reference to the commerce of the southern and southwestern States. Every ship load of produce coming through the Gulf of Mexico, and from Florida, Georgia, and a portion of South Carolina, in its transit either to Europe or the northern States, passes so immediately in its vicinity as to make it a position of incalculable importance in the occupation of an enemy.

Therefore be it—

1st. *Resolved*, That the fortification of Port Royal harbor, in South Carolina, is necessary to insure a better protection to the southern sea-coast of this country against invasion, and to afford a safe refuge to its shipping in time of war.

2d. *Resolved*, That its depth of water and easy access, its wide bar, its healthful situation, its deep and safe anchorage within, its location amidst abundant and the best materials for naval construction, its great distance from any other dock-yard, and its position upon the pathway of southern and southwestern commerce, demonstrate the policy and propriety of making it available for the establishment of a dock-yard, naval depot, and coaling station by the federal government.

3d. *Resolved*, That our senators in Congress be instructed, and our representatives be requested, to press, on all proper occasions, and by all suitable means, the consideration of this subject on the houses to which they respectively belong, and to urge, at the same time, the prominent advantages afforded by these waters for the establishment of a navy yard and coaling station.

4th. *Resolved*, That his excellency the governor be requested to transmit, as early as possible, a copy of the foregoing report and resolutions to each of our senators and representatives in Congress.

IN THE SENATE, *December 6, 1856.*

Resolved, That the senate do agree to the report.

Ordered, That it be sent to the house of representatives for concurrence.

By order :

WILLIAM E. MARTIN,
Clerk of the Senate.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *December —, 1856.*

Resolved, That the house do concur in the report.

Ordered, That it be returned to the senate.

By order:

JOHN T. SLOWN,
Clerk of the House of Representatives.

